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TEXTS FOR STUDENTS. No. 22^A

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

OF THE SO-CALLED

SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT
TO THE CORINTHIANS

*SEE LIGHTFOOT'S I EP OF CLEM.
APPENDIX (TR. P. 345 ff.)*

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PREFACE

THIS treatise, traditionally ascribed to St. Clement of Rome, is in reality a second-century sermon by an unknown author. Possibly the writer's name was Clement—it was a common name among Christians—but more probably the sermon was preserved in the archives of the Church of Corinth with the genuine epistle of Clement to that Church, and the two writings were copied into the same manuscript, and were later ascribed to the same author. That Corinth was the place of origin is probable from chap. vii., where the Isthmian games seem to be mentioned from the point of view of one dwelling on the spot. The date cannot be definitely fixed, but was probably A.D. 130–150.

We read the little treatise with great interest, since it is the earliest extant Christian sermon. Modern scholars generally dismiss it as a feeble production, containing nothing but pious platitudes. Most modern sermons would be similarly condemned if judged by the same standards. Scholars are inclined to be severe on a document which, being quite uncontroversial, throws no light on the problems which interest them. Judged by other standards it is an

excellent sermon—simple, earnest, and all the better for being uncontroversial; it was evidently preserved because of its merits. Readers who look up the references can form their own conclusions as to the authority of the New Testament at the time. Clearly the canon was far from fixed, or there would be proportionately fewer quotations from uncanonical writings. The doctrine of Christ's Person is very high.

The present translation was made by the Editorial Secretary of the S.P.C.K. as a companion to the Greek text provided in No. 22 of this series.

SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS

I. BRETHREN, we must think of Jesus Christ as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead, and we must not think little of our salvation. 2. For when we think little of Him it is little indeed that we may hope to obtain. And those who listen as though it were about little things sin, and we also sin if we do not know out of what and by Whom and to what place we were called, and how many things Jesus Christ endured to suffer for our sake. 3. What return, then, shall we make to Him, or what fruit shall we give worthy of His gift to us? And how great a debt of piety do we owe Him! 4. For He gave us the light; as a Father He called us sons. He saved us when we were perishing. 5. What praise, then, shall we give Him, or what reward for the benefits which we received? 6. We were blind in our understanding, worshipping stones and stocks and gold and silver and copper, the works of men, and our whole life was nothing else than death. Enveloped with darkness, and with our eyes full of

such mist, we yet recovered our sight, and by His will cast off the cloud which enveloped us. 7. For He had mercy on us, and in His compassion He saved us, seeing great error and destruction in us, and our hopelessness of salvation, unless that which comes from Him. 8. For He called us when we were not, and willed that out of nothing we should come to being.

II. "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for many more are the children of the desolate than of her which hath the husband." When He said, "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not," He spake of us, for our Church was barren before children were given her. 2. And when He said, "Cry, thou that travailest not," He means this, that we should offer our prayers in sincerity to God, and not faint like women in travail. 3. And when He said, "For the children of the desolate are many more than of her which hath a husband," He meant that our people seemed to be desolate and deserted by God; but now, having believed, we have become more than those who seemed to have God. 4. Again, another Scripture says: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." 5. He means that it is necessary to save the perishing. 6. For this is great and wonderful, to establish not the things which are standing, but those which are

I. 8. 1 Cor. i. 28.

II. 1. Isa. liv. 1; Gal. iv. 27. 4. Matt. ix. 13; Mark ii. 17; Luke v. 32.

falling. 7. So also Christ willed to save the things that were perishing, and He saved many men, coming and calling us when we were already perishing.

III. Seeing, then, that He has bestowed such mercy upon us, in the first place that we who are living do not sacrifice to the dead gods, nor worship them, but through Him know the Father of Truth, what is true knowledge as regards Him except that we should not deny Him through Whom we knew the Father? 2. Now He Himself says: "He that confessed Me before men, I will confess him before My Father." 3. This, then, is our reward if we confess Him through Whom we were saved. 4. But in what way do we confess Him? By doing what He says, and not disobeying His commandments, and honouring Him not only with our lips, but "with all our heart and all our mind." 5. And He says also in Isaiah: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

IV. Let us, then, not only call Him Lord, for this will not save us. 2. For He says: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but he that doeth righteousness." 3. So then, brethren, let us confess Him in our works by loving one another, by not committing adultery, nor speaking one against another, nor being envious, but by being self-

II. 7. Luke xix. 10.

III. 2. Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8. 4. Mark xii. 30. 5. Isa. xxix. 13; Matt. xv. 8; Mark vii. 6.

IV. 2. Matt. vii. 21.

controlled, merciful, good; and we ought to sympathise with one another, and not be covetous. By these works we confess Him, and not by the opposite kind. 4. And we must not fear men rather than God. 5. For this reason, if ye do these things, the Lord said: "If ye be gathered together with Me in My bosom, and do not My commandments, I will cast you out, and will say to you, Depart from Me; I know you not whence ye are, ye workers of iniquity."

V. Wherefore, brethren, let us forsake our sojourning in this world, and let us do the will of Him Who called us, and not be afraid to depart out of this world. 2. For the Lord said: "Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves." 3. And Peter answered and said to Him: "What if the wolves should tear the lambs?" 4. Jesus said to Peter: "The lambs need not fear the wolves after they are dead; and so with you—fear not those that slay you, and can do nothing more to you; but fear Him who after your death hath power over body and soul, to cast them into the gehenna of fire." 5. And know, brethren, that the sojourning in this world of our flesh is short and transitory, but the promise of Christ is great and wonderful, and means the rest of the kingdom which is to come and eternal life. 6. What, then, shall we do to obtain these things, save walk in holiness and righteousness, and regard these worldly things as

IV. 5. The source of the quotation is unknown; the last clause is found in Luke xiii. 27.

V. 2-4. Source unknown.

alien to us, and not desire them? 7. For when we desire to win these things we fall from the righteous path.

VI. The Lord says: "No servant can serve two masters." If we desire to serve both God and mammon it is unprofitable to us. 2. "For what advantage is it if a man gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" 3. Now this world and the world to come are two enemies. 4. This world spells adultery and corruption and deceit, but that world bids these things farewell. 5. We cannot, then, be friends of the two; but we must bid farewell to this world and use the other. 6. Let us reckon that it is better to hate the things which are here, for they are little and transitory and corruptible, and to love the things there, which are good and incorruptible. 7. For if we do the will of Christ we shall find rest; otherwise nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, if we neglect His commandments. 8. And the Scripture also says, in Ezekiel, that "though Noah and Job and Daniel arise, they shall not deliver their children in the captivity." 9. But if even such righteous men cannot deliver their children by their own righteous acts, with what confidence shall we enter into the palace of God, if we keep not our baptism pure and undefiled? Or who shall be our advocate if we be not found having holy and righteous works?

VI. 1. Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13. 2. Matt. xvi. 26; Mark viii. 36; Luke ix. 25. 8. Ezek. xiv. 14, 18, 20.

VII. So, then, my brethren, let us contend, knowing that the contest is close at hand, and that many disembark to take part in corruptible contests, but not all are crowned—only those who have toiled much and contended well. 2. Let us then contend that we may all be crowned. 3. So let us run the straight course, the incorruptible contest, and let many of us disembark to take part in it, and contend, that we may also be crowned; and if we cannot all be crowned, let us at least come near to the crown. 4. We must know that he who contends in the corruptible contest, if he be found dealing corruptly, is flogged, taken away, and thrown off the course. 5. What do you think? What shall he suffer who deals corruptly in the contest of incorruption? 6. For of those who have not kept the seal it says: "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be a spectacle for all flesh."

VIII. Let us repent, then, while we are on earth. 2. For we are clay for the hand of the craftsman; for just as the potter, if he is making a vessel, and it be bent or broken in his hands, reshapes it; but if he has got so far as to put it into the fiery oven, cannot help it any more; so also let us, so long as we are in this world, repent with all our heart of the evil things which we have done in the flesh, that we may be saved by the Lord, while we have time for repentance. 3. For after we have departed from this world, we

VII. 6. Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. *the seal, i.e., of baptism.*

can no longer make confession there, or repent any more. 4. So then, brethren, if we do the will of the Father, and preserve the flesh pure, and keep the commandments of the Lord, we shall obtain eternal life. 5. For the Lord says in the Gospel: "If ye kept not that which is little, who shall give you that which is great? For I tell you that he who is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much." 6. So, then, he means this: Keep the flesh pure, and the seal undefiled, that we may obtain life.

IX. And let none of you say that this flesh is not judged, and does not even rise again. 2. Understand: in what state were ye saved; in what did you receive your sight, except in this flesh? 3. We must therefore guard the flesh as a temple of God. 4. For like as you were called in the flesh, you shall also come in the flesh. 5. If Christ the Lord, Who saved us, being first spirit, became flesh and so called us, so also we shall receive our reward in this flesh. 6. Let us then love one another, that we may all come to the Kingdom of God. 7. While we have time to be healed, let us give ourselves to God, Who heals us, giving Him recompense. 8. What recompense? Repentance from a sincere heart. 9. For He has foreknowledge of all things, and knows what is in our hearts. 10. Let us then give Him eternal praise, not only with the mouth, but also from the heart, that He may receive us as sons. 11. For the Lord

VIII. 5. Luke xvi. 10-12.

IX. 11. Mark xii. 50; Mark iii. 35; Luke viii. 21.

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said: "My brethren are these who do the will of My Father."

X. Wherefore, my brethren, let us do the will of the Father Who called us, that we may live, and let us rather pursue virtue, and give up vice as the fore-runner of our sins, and let us flee from impiety lest evils overtake us. 2. For if we are diligent to do good, peace will pursue us. 3. For this cause it is not possible for a man to find it . . . when they bring in human fears and prefer present enjoyment to the promise which is to come. 4. For they know not what great torment present enjoyment brings, and what is the joy of the promised future. 5. And if they did these things by themselves it would be tolerable, but, as it is, they continue to teach evil to guiltless souls, not knowing that they will have double condemnation, both they and their hearers.

XI. Let us, then, serve God with a pure heart and we shall be righteous; but if we do not serve Him, because we do not believe the promise of God, we shall be wretched. 2. For the word of prophecy also says: "Wretched are the double-minded, who doubt in their heart and say, All these things we heard we heard even in our fathers' time, yet we have waited day after day, and have seen none of them. 3. Ye foolish ones, compare yourselves to a tree. Take a vine; first it sheds its leaves, then there comes a

X. 3. The text is probably corrupt.

XI. 2-4. Quoted as Scripture in 1 Clem. xxiii. 3, 4, source unknown.

shoot, after this the grape, then the ripe grape. 4. So also my people had tumults and afflictions, afterwards it shall receive good things." 5. Wherefore, my brethren, let us not be double-minded, but let us endure in hope, that we may also receive the reward. 6. "For he is faithful that promised" to pay to each man the recompense of his deeds. 7. If, then, we do righteousness before God, we shall enter into His Kingdom and receive the promises "which ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man."

XII. Let us then await the Kingdom of God hourly in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of God's appearing. 2. For the Lord Himself, asked by someone when His Kingdom would come, said: "When the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside, and the male with the female neither male nor female." 3. Now "the two are one" when we speak to one another in truth, and there is one soul in two bodies without dissimulation. 4. And "the outside as the inside" means this: the inside means the soul and the outside the body. In like manner, therefore, as thy body is visible, so let thy soul be manifest in good works. 5. And "the male with the female neither male nor female," means that a brother seeing a sister should have no thought of her as female,

XI. 6. Heb. x. 23. 7. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

XII. 2. This saying is found, according to Clement of Alexandria, in the Gospel of the Egyptians; it is also in the Oxyrhyncus papyri.

nor should she think of him as male. 6. "If ye do this," He says, "the Kingdom of My Father shall come."

XIII. Therefore, brethren, now at last let us repent and be sober unto the good, for we are full of much folly and wickedness; let us wipe off from ourselves our former sins, and by repentance from the soul win salvation. Let us not become men-pleasers, nor desire to please by our righteousness ourselves alone, but rather those also that are without, that the Name be not blasphemed by reason of us. 2. For the Lord says, "Continually is My name blasphemed among all the Gentiles"; and again, "Woe unto him by reason of whom My name is blasphemed." Wherein is it blasphemed? In that you do not what I desire. 3. For when the Gentiles hear from our mouth the oracles of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness; afterwards, when they learn that our works are unworthy of the words which we speak, they turn from their attitude to blasphemy, saying that it is a myth and a delusion. 4. For when they hear from us that God says, "It is no thank to you, if ye love them that love you, but it is thank to you if ye love your enemies and them that hate you"—when they hear this they wonder at its extraordinary goodness; but when they see that not only do we not love them that hate us, but not even those who love us, they laugh at us, and the Name is blasphemed.

XIII. 2. Isa. lii. 5. The second quotation is unknown. 4. Luke vi. 32, 35.

XIV. So, brethren, if we do the will of God our Father, we shall be of the first Church, the spiritual one created before the sun and moon; but if we do not the Lord's will, we shall be of the Scripture which saith, "My house was made a den of robbers." Let us therefore choose to be of the Church of life, that we may be saved. 2. I suppose you are not ignorant that the living "Church is the body of Christ"? For the Scripture saith, "God made man male and female"; the male is Christ and the female is the Church. And it is clear that the books and the Apostles say that the Church is not of the present but from the beginning; for she was spiritual, as was also our Jesus, and He was manifested in the last days to save us. 3. And the Church, being spiritual, was manifested in the flesh of Christ, showing us that if any of us guard her in the flesh and corrupt her not, he shall receive her again in the Holy Spirit. For this flesh is an antitype of the Spirit; no one, therefore, who has corrupted the antitype shall receive the original. So, then, it means this: Guard the flesh, that ye may partake of the Spirit. 4. But if we say that the flesh is the Church and the Spirit is Christ, then he who has abused the flesh has abused the Church. Such a one, therefore, will not partake of the Spirit, which is Christ. 5. So great is the life and immortality which this flesh has the power to receive, if the Holy Spirit is

XIV. 1. Jer. vii. 11; Matt. xxi. 13. 2. Eph. i. 23; Gen. i. 27 1 Pet. i. 20. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

joined to it, nor can any man utter or tell "the things which the Lord has prepared" for His elect.

XV. I think I have given no mean counsel concerning self-control, and whoever follows it shall not repent, but shall save both himself and me, his counsellor. For it is no small reward to convert a wandering and perishing soul that it may be saved. 2. For we have this recompense to pay to God our Creator, if he who speaks and hears both speaks and hears with faith and love. 3. Let us then abide in what we believed, righteous and holy, that we may pray with confidence to God, Who says: "While thou art yet speaking I will say, Behold, here am I." 4. For this saying betokens a great promise; for the Lord says that He is more ready to give than he that asketh to ask. 5. Being, then, partakers of such great goodness, let us not grudge ourselves the obtaining of such blessings. For great as is the delight which these words bring to those who have done them, equally great is the condemnation which they contain for the disobedient.

XVI. Wherefore, brethren, since we have received no small opportunity for repentance, let us, while we have time, return to God Who called us, so long as we still have One ready to receive us. 2. For if we bid farewell to these enjoyments and conquer our soul, by refusing to do its evil lusts, we shall partake of the mercy of Jesus. 3. But ye know that "the

XV. 3. Isa. lviii. 9.

XVI. 3. Mal. vi. 1; Isa. xxxiv. 4.

day of judgment is already coming as a burning oven, and the powers of heaven shall melt," and the whole earth shall be as lead melting in the fire, and then shall appear the secret and open works of men. 4. Almsgiving is therefore good, as is repentance for sin; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving better than both; and love "covers a multitude of sins," but prayer out of a good conscience delivers from death. Blessed is every man who is found full of them; for almsgiving lightens the burden of sin.

XVII. Let us then repent with our whole heart, lest any of us perish by the way. For if we have commandments to do this also, to drag men away from idols and instruct them, how much more is it necessary that a soul which already knows God should not perish? 2. Let us then help one another, and lead on those that are weak as regards goodness, that we may all be saved, and convert and admonish one another. 3. And let us not only seem now to attend and believe while we are admonished by the presbyters, but also when we have gone home let us remember the Lord's commandments and not be dragged the other way by worldly lusts; rather let us attend more frequently, and try to advance in the commandments of the Lord, that "all having the same mind," our gathering together may be unto life. 4. For the Lord said: "I come to gather together all the nations, tribes, and languages." By this He

XVI. 4. Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8.

XVII. 3. Rom. xii. 16; Phil. ii. 2. 4. Isa. lxvi. 18.

means the day of His appearing, when He will come and redeem us, each according to his works. 5. And the unbelievers "shall see His glory" and might, and shall be amazed when they see the palace of the world in the hands of Jesus, and shall say: "Woe unto us, for it was Thou, and we knew not and did not believe, and were disobedient to the presbyters who told us of our salvation. And "their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be a spectacle to all flesh." 6. He is speaking of that day of judgment, when they shall see those that lived impiously in our midst and perverted the commandments of Jesus Christ. 7. But the righteous, who have done good, and endured torments and hated the pleasures of the soul, when they see those who have done amiss and denied Jesus by their words or their deeds, how they are punished by terrible torments in unquenchable fire, shall be giving "glory to their God," saying: "There shall be hope for him who has served God with all his heart."

XVIII. Let us also be of the number of those who give thanks, who have served God, and not of the impious who are judged. 2. For I myself also am altogether sinful, and have not yet escaped temptation, but being still surrounded by the engines of the Devil, I strive to follow after righteousness, that I may be strong enough at least to come near it, fearing the judgment to come.

XVII. 5. Isa. lxvi. 18, 24. 7. Apoc. xi. 18.

XIX. Therefore, brothers and sisters, after ye have heard the God of Truth, I am reading you a petition that ye heed what is written, that ye may save both yourselves and him who reads among you. For as my reward, I beseech you to repent with all your heart, giving yourselves salvation and life. For by doing this we shall set up a mark for all the young who wish to work in the cause of piety and the goodness of God. 2. And let us not be foolishly vexed or angry when anyone admonishes us and turns us from unrighteousness to righteousness. For sometimes when we do evil we perceive it not because of the double-mindedness and unbelief within our breasts, and we are "darkened in our understanding" by vain lusts. 3. Let us then do righteousness, that we may be saved at the end. Blessed are they who obey these commands; though for a little time they suffer in this world, they shall gather the immortal fruit of the resurrection. 4. Let not, then, the religious man grieve if he be miserable in these present times. A time of blessedness awaits him; he shall live again above with the Fathers, and rejoice in an eternity without sorrow.

XX. But neither let this disturb your mind, that we see the unrighteous wealthy and the servants of God straitened. 2. Let us have faith, then, brothers and sisters; we are contending in the contest of the living God, and are being trained in this present life

XIX. 1. *Him who reads.* The author is possibly only in minor orders, as a "reader." 2. Eph. iv. 18.

that we may be crowned in the life to come. 3. None of the righteous attains a reward quickly, but he waits for it. 4. For if God had been wont to pay the reward of the righteous quickly, we should at once have been training in commerce and not in godliness; for we should have seemed to be righteous when we were pursuing not piety, but gain. And for this reason Divine judgment punishes a spirit which is not righteous and loads it with chains.

5. To the only God, invisible, Father of Truth, Who sent us the Saviour and Prince of Immortality, through Whom also He manifested to us the truth and the heavenly life, to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

XX. 5. 1 Tim. i. 17.